

Please accept the below Letter to the Globe Editor:

I was quite surprised to read in the Globe that Pan Am Railways Executive Vice President, Cynthia Scarano claims that she had heard nothing from the town of Westford regarding the derailment that occurred in our community on February 19th. We called her office several times during the day of February 20th when we discovered the derailment, but were told that she was in meetings all day. Also, we spoke extensively with Pan Am's General Manager and Executive VP of Safety and Security on the phone and at the scene that day. This lack of communication is a problem for Westford as we rely on Pan Am to notify us if there are any incidents involving their railway operation that may impact public safety in our community. We were fortunate that during the derailment on February 19th we avoided a major disaster, but we cannot rely on a town official driving by the tracks as a way to find out about these incidents.

It appears that federal regulations only require Pan Am to notify Westford officials of a train derailment under certain conditions. We are hopeful that new regulations will be enacted so that Pan Am does not have a choice whether or not to inform our town officials of an accident, as it recently did on an overpass above our public road, adjacent to our public water supply aquifer, and less than 50 fifty feet from one of our resident's homes.

We are pleased that Senators Warren and Markey and Congresswoman Tsongas, along with our State Representative Jim Arciero and State Senator Eileen Donoghue have offered to help us resolve these concerns and hope that Pan Am will do its part by communicating better with us in the future.

Jodi Ross, Town Manager